
Kessler, Ellen

From: Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC [Stephanie.Strength@wdc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2009 11:05 AM
To: Lilley, Bliss; Collins, Carly
Subject: FW: CapX2020 Project in Minnesota
Attachments: SkyHarborAirpark.jpg

From: ryanflicek@yahoo.com [mailto:ryanflicek@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2009 12:04 PM
To: Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC
Subject: CapX2020 Project in Minnesota

Hello Stephanie,

I'm a Rice County, Minnesota resident and have been reviewing those documents regarding the Brookings Co to Hampton Transmission line (part of the CapX2020 Project) on the Minnesota State website.

I have read about one of the alternative Rice County routes that is being included in the Environmental Assessment. As a local pilot, I can tell you because of Sky Harbor Airpark, an airport located just north of 50th St West, the alternative route should NOT have been accepted for review. If this proposed alternative route was to be used, the approach path to Runway 30 at Sky Harbor would be severely compromised, causing a significant safety hazard for landing aircraft.

Both the 57th St W and the 50th St W options pose a significant danger to Sky Harbor air traffic, however the 50th St W option would definitely pose more danger. Some people with a naïve understanding of airport operations may simply suggest a change to the traffic pattern, however the problem is much more complex. A much more critical consideration is the safety of the approach/departure surfaces off the end of the runway. Under the 50th ST W option, if we were conducting an FAA approach/departure obstruction survey on the RWY 30 approach-end at Sky Harbor, the proposed transmission line would fall within the limits of the FAA-approach-surface used for evaluation. At its closest point, the transmission line would fall within 0.5 miles of the runway end. On a straight-out departure, the transmission line would cross the approach surface approx 1-mile from-runway-end. At a 40:1 approach/departure slope, an object higher than approx 65 feet would penetrate the approach/departure surface at the 0.5 mile point. At the 1-mile point, an object higher than approx. 130 feet would penetrate the approach/departure surface. As I understand it, the transmission lines would be approx 150 feet tall. So, just running quick-and-dirty numbers, the transmission line would definitely constitute an "obstruction" as it relates to aviation.

Sky Harbor Airpark is a destination which welcomes many visiting pilots and large gatherings/fly-ins. Because the Runway is grass (not asphalt) at Sky Harbor, many curious visiting pilots are attracted to the area (grass runways are becoming more rare). These transmission lines would pose the increased risk to visiting pilots, not as accustomed to the area as local pilots. Because it is a private field, pre-flight information regarding Sky Harbor is not as readily available to pilots as it would be for an FAA-governed airport, such as a Municipal, Regional, or International airports. Thus, I am worried that the status of new transmission lines in this area may not adequately be disseminated to pilots. This danger would rise exponentially when you factor in flight operations occurring at night or in conditions involving reduced visibility.

Because of the short length of the runway at Sky Harbor, traffic patterns are often flown much lower than standard. Furthermore, in addition to many normally certificated aircraft, Sky Harbor is home to many Ultra-Light Aircraft as well. The normal operating altitudes of these types of aircraft is much lower than those of normally certificated aircraft. The performance characteristics of these aircraft make them less capable of making abrupt flight maneuvers to avoid collision with obstacles, should a pilot accidentally find themselves too close to these obstacles. There are also a few Sky Harbor residents that operate helicopters, which often depart and approach

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This federal scoping process is specific to only the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345-kV project. As such, we have forwarded your comments to the project team dealing with the project with which you have raised concerns.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

the area at altitudes much lower than fixed-wing aircraft.

All-in-all, as a pilot, flight instructor, and professional in an aviation-safety industry, I know that there are far too many safety-risks pilots already encounter on a day-to-day basis. By erecting these transmission lines, it would be unfairly imposing another great risk to safety on these pilots, further complicating their operations.

Attached to this email is an aerial photo showing the proposed route of the transmission line (in green) and the runway (in red). For your orientation, this location is just a couple miles southeast of Webster, Minnesota.

Thank you.

Ryan Flicek

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